Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., "On the Principle of Idealism: 'Whatever is Outside of the Mind is Unknowable'," *Angelicum,* Vol. X, 1933.

In recent books we have recently examined, what exactly the principle or foundation of modem idealism is and its strength.

To this end, in this article we shall treat of the principle of idealism especially as recently proposed in France. We shall see: 1. how it is proposed by modem French Idealists and what this principle presupposes from the teaching of Descartes and Kant from which it proceeds, 2. we will investigate the strength of the aforesaid principle considered in itself.

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How is this principle proposed by modern idealists and what is presupposed by it?

Idealism has been defended in France these past few years by Professor Edouard Le Roy, his student Henri Bergson, who was professor at the Collège de France after him, and by Professor Leon Brunschvicg, for many years professor at the Sorbonne.

For these two philosophers and many other modern philosophers the principle of idealism is formulated in this way: *whatever is outside of the mind is unknowable.* Professor Edouard Le Roy often stated this principle in various articles in the periodical *Revue de Metaphysique et de Morale,* 1907, which he gathers together in his more recent work Ze *Problème de Dieu,* 1929. This work, as everyone knows, was condemned by the Holy Office, and the author laudably submitted himself.

Professor Le Roy expressly says: "All ontological realism is absurd and leads to

ruin: an exterior, something beyond thought is by definition something absolutely inconceivable. They will never finish with this objection, and we must conclude, with all of modern philosophy, that a certain idealism imposes itself."[1]

Briefly: *whatever is outside of the mind is unknowable.*

It follows from this that the principle of contradiction and the principle of efficient causality, upon which the demonstrations of God's existence are founded, lack ontological or extra-mental force, and that therefore the traditional demonstrations of God's existence do not have probative force.

For Professor Le Roy writes,

> The principle of non-contradiction, supreme law of dicourse and thought in general, only covers the static, the broken, the immobile; in short, it only refers to those things with an identity. But there is contradition in the world, just as there is identity. For example, there are fleeting movements, the future (what is becoming), duration, life, these are things which by themselves are not discursive and which discourse modifies in order to grasp them in contradictory notions.[2]

This is to say: the principle of contradiction is a kind of law of speech or grammar; nay rather it is the supreme law of rational discourse itself, which is used in the law of abstract ideas, of identity, of immobile things, but it is not a universal law of superior intuition, nor a law of reality itself, for the fundamental reality is creative evolution.

Likewise Professor Le Roy in his last book *Le Problème de Dieu,* p. 92 sq. says: "The principle of causality does not reign (does not have jurisdiction) over phenomena... At bottom, the idea of a first cause is a deductive idol." *Ibidem,* p. 20 and 21:

[1] *Comment se pose le problème de Dieu (Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale,* Juillet 1907, p. 448, 495. Item, *Le Problème de Dieu,* 1929, p. 111.
[2] *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale,* 1905, p. 200-204.

> With the posutlate of common sense, all movement explains itself by a stillness, and it is necessary then to have a supreme stillness as the supreme principle of explanation. But the true philosophiocal method proceeds in the opposite way. She envisions, to the contrary, movement as a fundamental reality and she considers stillness, as a second and derivative reality. If one adopts this point of view, the argument of the first mover evaporates because of this. Things being composed of movement—it can no longer be a question of asking how they recieved movement.

This is clearly saying: the fundamental reality is not self-subsisting Being, it is Creative Evolution. This is clearly the mind of the aforesaid author who adds: "Why, in one word, would the perfect not be an ascension, a growth, rather than an immobile plenitude?" [3] Why would the highest perfection be progress itself as the ascension towards the better, and not a kind of unchangeable plenitude?

Hence according to these declarations, the principle of idealism asserts: whatever is outside of the mind is unknowable. From this it follows that the principle of contradiction and the principle of causality lack ontological strength or force outside of the mind and that, consequently, the traditional demonstrations of God's existence do not have probative force. Religious experience is substituted for them, according to which the fundamental reality is not the self-subsisting Being, but creative Evolution.

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Recently, Professor Leon Brunschvicg, in the periodical *Revue de Metaphysique et de Morale,* Jan.-Mar. 1931, in articles written chiefly against Professor Gilson and Professor Maritain, under the title "True and False Conversion", states the principle of idealism in much the same way, namely: *the mind can only know mental likenesses of*

[3] *Le Problème de Dieu,* p. 95.

things outside the mind, nor can it compare these likenesses with the things themselves in order to know whether they are properly true. Professor Brunschvicg says: [4]

> If the being of a knowing subject (by representation of the internal action) only ressembles the being of the known object, it is that it does not coincide with it. Ressemblance only is meaningful in as much as it differs from identity (identicalness). How then, when dogmatic realism awakes from its secular sleep, when it testifies by some hint of critical reflection on the words it uses, how will it avoid confronting the blinding evidence of contradiction? How will it be possible for realism to assert the ressemblance of the original in the knowing subject when by the very act of knowing he is detached (M. Gilson says liberated) from this original. Such a question, from the moment it is explicitly formulated, is not suited to any response. Also, would I be afraid that realism has only one resource and that she is resigned to it: To pretend not to have heard the question that she herself has expressed.
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> One will see (realists) use all the nuances—perhaps even abuse the false nuances—of metaphysical discourse in order to claim that resemblance is not exactly resemblance, until the space between the object and subject that realism inevitably (without remedy) implies becomes ever more tentative and fades away until the point where the initial coincidence seems to be restored and likewise the original confusion.

Briefly: reality outside of the mind cannot be know except through its likeness, the real strength of which always remains in doubt.

Therefore, the principle of Idealism is always formulated in the same way, namely: "whatever is outside of the mind is unknowable".

So therefore Professor Brunschvicg, if he truly wants to observe his position, can say absolutely nothing, at least as a philosopher, concerning these things which are outside of his own individual mind, namely about bodies, about other minds and men, and even about these philosophical products. But here solipsism is the abdication of philosophy itself properly speaking, as Professor Parodi, another modem philosopher objects to him, writes "The conclusions of Mr. Brunschvicg seem to announce the resignation of philosophy properly speaking, which, once she has discovered freedom in

[4] Art.Cit, p. 46.

the positive scientific work and concrete morality, hardly seems to be able, according to him, to go beyond that." After the discovery of the liberty or autonomy of his own spirit, the idealist cannot affirm that anything else is coherant with himself.

To this objection Professor Bruschvicg briefly pauses to respond.[5] But of this, by right of merit, what he says realists, needs to be stated, namely he pretends that he does not hear the question which arises from his conclusions, and he even uses entirely false subtleties to show that our mind, which is in no way able to know realities outside of the mind, nevertheless knows them in some way, otherwise it would be reduced, like Cratylus, to absolute silence about the existence and nature of matter, of God and of other men. Yet Professor Brunschvicg formulates his principle again, by showing its connection with the sentiment of nominalism: "The solidarity of nominalism and rationalism is a marked advance of modem philosophy". Thus it clearly happens as the adversaries themselves will confess, that this question of epistemology is reduced to the problem of universals which was certainly not unknown to the scholastics.

From these points it is clearly shown that the principle of idealism is exactly formulated in this way: "whatever is outside of the mind is unknowable". It is the formula upon which radical nominalism and subjective conceptualism and the idealism of the moderns agree.

This is commonly acknowledged; thus Professor Gilson said recently against Professor Le Roy: : "Something beyond thought is unthinkable; this is not only the perfect idealist formula, it is also its condemnation. I.e. this nominalism, which is radically opposed to traditional realism, does not permit that modern philosophy knows

5 Art. cit. p. 58, 59.

reality outside of the mind."[6] Also see what Professor Maritain writes in his most recent and best book: *Degrees of Knowledge,* ch. Ill: "Critical Realism" and Appendix I "Regarding the Concept". Again many Thomists formulate the principle of idealism this way: The quiddity of a thing (outside of the mind) as it is in itself necessarily eludes every consideration of the mind... The knowledge of things is given not as they are in themselves, but as they are according to their appearance in the objective representation of the mind.... That objection expresses the fundamental point by means of which speculative Kantianism is professed" [7] and all idealism.

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Many think that St. Thomas had ignored these difficulties. And yet he treats and comments on them in his *Summa Theologica* I, q. 85, a. 2, whether the intelligible species is related to our intellect as *that which* is understood, or as *that by which* it is understood. Objection 1 is: *"The thing actually understood* (or the thing known by the intellect) *is in the one who understands,* since the thing actually understood is the intellect itself in act. But nothing of the thing understood is in the intellect by actually understanding, *except the abstracted intelligible species',* therefore the intelligible species is the intellect itself in act." This objection, which was formerly proposed by the sophists and which Aristotle knew well, expresses precisely the same thing as what is said by the modern idealists Le Roy and Brunschvicg, namely whatever is outside of the mind is unknowable; or that which is known by us is not the nature of a thing outside of the mind, but its

[6] *Philosophia perennis,* Abhandlungen zu ihrer Vergangenheit und Gegenwart. Festgabe Joseph Geyser zum 60. Geburtstag. Regensburg, 1930, t. II, p. 751.
[7] Cf. P.M. Browne, O.P., *Angelicum,* Jan.,1931, p. 56.

representation in the mind, or a mental word, which is not only intelligible in act (like the impressed species), but which is the thing actually understood.

Certainly Aristotle and St. Thomas, always said: knowledge is an immanent act, and material things, which are outside of the soul, just as they are material, are not intelligible except potentially; they do not become intelligibles actually except in the impressed intelligible species, and not as they are actually understood except in a mental word. Nay rather, St. Thomas clearly affirms that even an angel cannot know itself intuitively except in some mental word, because an angel is indeed actually intelligible, but he is not, from himself, actually understood; only God is both his own understanding actually and the thing itself which is understood, (cf. St. Thomas, *S.C.G.* IV, 11).

Does it not follow from this that whatever is outside of the mind in unknowable?

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This indeed follows clearly from the hypothesis admitted by Kant and by Descartes before him. But, the question is really about the strength of this hypothesis.

I contend that it is more certain that whatever is outside of the mind is unknowable, if, as Kant wanted, we do not know exterior things *except through merely subjective forms of sensibility,* which according to him are space and time, *and through merely subjective categories of the mind,* which for him are substance, causality, etc.

But Kant never proved that space and time are a priori forms or that they are of a merely subjective sensibility, and that the notions of substance, causality, etc. are merely subjective categories of the mind.

This conception is merely a hypothesis, as Kant himself admits, when he says: just as Copernicus wanted to explain heavenly appearances by saying: the sun does not revolve around the earth, but the earth around the sun, so too we shall see whether the problem of knowledge can be solved by saying: our mind is not measured by things, but things known, as they are known by us, are measured by the subjective forms of our mind.

From this hypothesis follows: that the sun appears to us as a substance, but we cannot affirm that the sun is really a substance in itself; the sun appears to us as the cause of heat and light, but we cannot affirm that this causality truly exists outside of the mind; a murder seems like the cause of death to us, but from this it does not follow that really outside of the soul he truly was the cause of death, and that consequently he can deserve punishment.

Moreover, Kant's disciple Fichte finds a great and insoluble difficulty in Kantianism, namely: the application of the subjective categories to external phenomena remains *entirely arbitrary.* Disciples are the roughest when they provide a critique of their teacher's doctrine. Why, says Fichte, does our reason apply the category of causality rather than the category of substance to these phenomena? If it is answered: because our reason sees in those phenomena a relation to causality, rather than to substance, then we return to the first intellectual apprehension which comes with abstraction.§ Hence, as Fichte says, to adopt the principle of idealism and to deny the free application of the categories, it is necessary to say that they provide the phenomena themselves, not from something external, but from the knowing subject, and thus human

reason becomes entirely autonomous. But then the truth would be to say that *human knowledge is the cause of things,* and consequently no mystery remains for our intellect, just as none remains for the divine intellect. On the contrary, however, many mysteries remain for us in the very nature of things.

Therefore, Kant in no way proved that our ideas are not abstracted from sensible things. And to the contrary, everything leads us to admit that our ideas really are abstracted from sensible things.

Further, even if our ideas were innate or infused, as are, according to theologians, the ideas of angels, it would not follow that being outside of the mind would be unknowable. But really this follows more certainly from the Kantian hypothesis, which remains entirely unproveable. Nor is this hypothesis merely improbable, but it is outside the path of reason itself, since it does not explain the fact of knowing things but destroys it. For the first condition of a hypothesis is that it must explain the fact by explaining and it should not destroy it.

Indeed, before Kant, Descartes posited the foundation of modem idealism, when he began the *Discourse on Method* by doubting the real force of the principle of contradiction: a square circle is indeed *something inconceivable to us,* but perhaps it is *not something really impossible in itself, outside of the mind.* Now this is an affirmation of the impossibility of knowing *a thing in itself* outside of the mind. Descartes formulated his hyperbolic doubt saying: Perhaps if God exists, he can make a square circle and a mountain without valleys, although this is inconceivable to us. And later[8]

[8] Again it is not explained why external phenomena fall so easily under our subjective categories, if they have no relation with them. And finally synthetic a priori judgments are blind judgments without any a priori motive, nor any a posterior one; this is to posit irrationality within the heart of reason.
[9] Descartes, *Responses to the Fifth Objection.*

Descartes clearly affirms this when he maintains that the truth of the first principles of metaphysics, *even the truth of the principle of contradiction, depends upon the free will of God,* so that God would be able to establish the contrary. "He says, from the very fact that God wills something he knows [it to be] thus, and only thus is such a thing true." To which Liebniz answers: Then God is not self-subsisting being by necessity, nor the Highest Good, and he could be, if he should will it, the highest Evil of the Manicheans. But this, as Liebniz says, is to do wrong to God[10] and to destroy all truth. For in this way Descartes himself could be Descartes and not Descartes, for as Aristotle showed in book IV of the *Metaphysics,* without the real force of the principle of contradiction no affirmation nor even opinion would be possible.

Certainly even from this Cartesian foundation, namely by rejecting the real force of the principle of contradiction, it follows that being outside of the mind, nay rather all beings as beings, distinct from a subjective representation, remain wholly unknowable. Nor does it suffice, as is obvious, to return to the criteria of God's veracity as the creator of our ability, because it would be necessary to first prove the existence of God, which is entirely impossible, without the real force of the principle of contradiction, and also without the force of the principle of causality and of experience itself. For by denying the force of the principle of contradiction he ruins the force of external experience and of internal experience as well, as we must steadfastly state.

Hence it must be conceded by all the modern idealists that from the things presupposed by the Kantian hypothesis, or also by what is presupposed by the hyperbolic doubt of Descartes, it most clearly follows that whatever is outside of the mind is entirely unknowable.

[10] Liebniz, *Theodore,* n. 171.

But what strength does this principle of idealism have independently of these presuppositions, [appealing to] nothing and outside of the path of formed reason.

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On the Force of the Principle of Idealism Considered in itself

In the first place we must note that there is no reason for the excessive doubt of Descartes concerning the real force of the principle of contradiction and is against the primary evidence of our understanding. By all accounts it is entirely evident not only that *it is impossible to affirm and deny the same thing of the same thing in the same respect.* but that it is impossible to affirm and deny that the same thing in the same respect exists and does not exist outside of the mind. That is: the ontological formulation of the principle of contradiction is no less evident than its logical formulation; and, according to this ontological formation, what is clearly absurd, such as a square circle, is not only something inconceivable to us, but it is obviously something really impossible in itself outside of the mind. Idealists would say: it is indeed inconceivable that a square circle could really be produced, but it does not follow from this that *it is really something impossible outside of the mind.*

Natural reason categorically affirms the contrary: a square circle is really and absolutely impossible *outside of the mind,* nay rather ***there can be no contradiction in things,*** nor can it take place in itself, nor in mysteries either natural ones or supernatural ones, there can be no contradiction in a real being. This was not adequately seen by Suarez in treating the mystery of the Trinity.

This primary truth, is not a judgement of the order of existence, as when I say "I think":, "I am". But it is a judgement of the conceptual order, though expressing a real impossibility outside of the mind: e.g. a square circle, as a thing in itself *(Ding an sich)* is really impossible not only according to us, but in itself; again a contingent being cannot be at the same time and in the same respect dependent upon some cause and not dependent on it. Again an agent cannot at the same time and in the same respect be acting and not acting, tending towards an end and not tending towards it.

It is entirely necessary to affirm this principle in itself, not merely as a logical one, nor merely as a law of the mind and a being of reason, but as a law of real being (both of possible and of actual being, not yet considering its state either of possibility or of actuality). Further this principle is formulated this way before any judgement of the order of existence, before the judgment of the existence of my own individual mind or of my body or of any bodies, before the judgement about the force of sensation and the origin of ideas: namely whether they come through abstraction from sensible things, this judgement happens later with sufficient clarity. Now we treat only of the first thing known by our intellect, which is the intelligible being of sensible things, confusedly known, to which non-being is opposed. We do not treat of a being of reason, but of a real being which can be whether it is possible (what is capable of existing) or actual.[1]

And here this first principle is affirmed as a law of real being outside of the mind, although it is not yet known explicitly in its designated act as it is outside of the mind.

But, without this ontological first principle, every judgement of the existential order becomes impossible, as does every judgement concerning the mind itself. Even "I

think, therefore, I am" cannot be said because then thought would perhaps be thought and not thought at the same time, at once conscious of oneself and not *conscious* of oneself, as an act of subconscious as it is unconsciousf???], again thought would perhaps be of this object and not of it; and especially: then perhaps ***I am thinking*** would be the same as I and not I, perhaps I would be only a modality of a universal substance as Spinoza says, so that the words: ***I am*** are not fully true. For if something can be and not be, and I can be and not be. This is indeed, as they say, something inconceivable, yet without the real force of the principle of contradiction, this is not really impossible. Thus hyperbolic doubt is turned back against doubting itself, which disappears. It is impossible, therefore, to firmly say I am, or even I think; but rather we must say impersonally it is thought, as we say: it is raining; and not even this is true with certainty, since, without the real force of the principle of contradiction, we must say rather; perhaps it is raining and not raining at the same time, and it is thought and not thought at the same time; for if I am not certain about the existence of my thought, as it is mine, a forterori I am not certain about the existence of thought impersonally, which cannot be truly called impersonal, except as it exists even outside of myself, and this remains inconceivable to me according to the principles of idealism. Further only a representation remains without real force, and one which can be called neither personal nor impersonal, and it cannot even be called a representation, since without certain object no certain subject is presented.

Form this it is clear that Descartes doubted unreasonably concerning the real force of the principle of contradiction presupposed by all other principles and by every judgement about the existence of the thinking subject, and of our own body or of other

ll We treat of the force of our first intellectual knowledge before it is a word e.g. of the division of being through potency and act, or of the necessity of admitting some medium (potency) between an act however

bodies. Denying the real force of the principle of contradiction or doubting it in the philosophical order is a radical inversion of this order, just as sinning against the Holy Spirit in the spiritual order, namely it is to withdraw from that light [liberatrice???], without which our intellect remains entirely blind; then the idealist philosopher, just as Cratylus, the disciple of Heraclitus, can affirm absolutely nothing, not even freedom or autonomy of his own spirit, nay rather, as Aristotle said he becomes like a plant, humoios phutow???, which has no cognitive faculty. Thus we come to absolute nothingness. Likewise Spinoza said of the sceptic: the function of the sceptic is, that of a complete mute, let him remain in a most profound silence.

To the contrary, if, under the primary evidence of our intellect, we affirm with certitude not only that something cannot at once be thought and not thought in the same respect, be that something cannot be and not be in the same respect, then we also affirm, that it is not merely a necessary law of the mind, but that it is a necessary law of being in itself.

But later through critical reflection it will be possible to say with certitude: I think and to add therefore I am; nay rather it will be possible to know not only the existence of our act of intellect, but its nature, nay rather the nature of the active principle from which this act proceeds, i.e. the nature of our intellect and its essential finality; just as we can know the essential finality of the eyes or the ears, or their reason for being; we see that sensation is inconsistent without a thing sensed, without out an objective cause and without an end.

As St. Thomas profoundly says in *de Veritate,* q. 1, a. 10: " Truth is in the intellect and in sense, although not in the same way. For it is in the intellect just as it follows the

imperfect and nothing. Further we do not use this distinction now which is fundamental in ontology.

act of the intellect and as the thing known through the intellect; for it follows the intellect's operation, insofar as there is a judgment of the intellect concerning reality as it is; but it is known by the intellect in as much as the intellect reflects upon its own act, not only insofar as it knows its act, but insofar as it knows its proportion to the thing; which indeed cannot be known, unless the nature of the active principle is known, which is the intellect, in whose nature it is as conformed to things. Hence according to this it knows the truth of the intellect which reflects upon itself." This it so say that our intellect by reflection upon itself knows its own essential finality and the essentially relative nature of a representation to the thing outside of the mind.12

Hence we ask the modern idealists:

1. By what legitimate reason do they doubt the real force of the principle of contradiction and affirm that perhaps something can at once be and not be outside of the mind?

2. How can they later affirm the existence of any personal or even impersonal knowledge?

3. Why is our intelligence not able to know its own nature and essential finality through reflection upon itself, and next the essential finality of its representation for knowing being outside of the mind?

Professor Le Roy says: "Something beyond the thinkable is by definition something absolutely unthinkable"13; certainly, if we cannot know except through a priori and merely subjective forms of the mind. But not if the principle of contradiction is most clearly not merely a law of the mind or a being of reason, but a law of real being in itself;

12 We developed this in a recent work: *Realism and the Principle of Finality* (Paris, Desclee de Brouwer, 1932) Part II chapters 1-3.

but not, if our intellect can know its own proper nature and finality. And why can't it know this, nay rather why can it not know it better than the finality of a bird's wings our of our own feet?

Professor Brunschvicg says:

> How would it be possible for dogmatic realism to guarantee in the knowing subject the ressemblance to the original of the representation when at the moment, by the very act of knowing, he is detached (Mr. Gilson tells us liberated) from this original.[13]

Certainly even this is impossible, if the intellect cannot know its own nature and fmalitity, and the essential finality of a representation, as it is essentially related to knowing a thing outside of the mind.

But Professor Brunschvig prefers to prove that our intellect cannot know its own proper finality, or that this fmalitity is not for understanding real being. Then knowledge of reality itself would be entirely absurd; then the theory of knowledge would not explain the fact of knowledge, but would destroy it, and our intellect would be wholly blind and not even able to affirm the primary law of real being. Concerning real being, as it is distinguished from a merely subjective representation, it could affirm nothing at all, not even the real existence of the knowing subject whether personal or impersonal, and then that representation would fail, which cannot be conceived except in some subject and through a relation to some object. Professor Brunschvicg says that Professor Maritain by adhering to the traditional realism returns to the pre-Cartesian period, perhaps he, by adhering to this subjectivism returns to the Protagorean.

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[13] *The Problem of God,* 1929, p. 111.
[14] Revue *de Metaphyique et de Morale,* Janvier 1931, p. 46.

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Next we ought to briefly recall how Aristotle and St. Thomas solved the objection of subjectivism once proposed by sophists and renewed by modern idealists.

Protagoras said: our cognitive powers only know their own passions, e.g. sense does not sense except the passions of its own organ, also the intellect understands nothing except its own modifications, hence all the sciences do not concern things themselves but rather the internal representations of things. Thus, Protagoras said, man is the measure of all things, his knowledge is not measured by things. This is radical antropocentricism. The modem idealist says the same thing, if not of the individual man, at least of human knowledge in its actual state of evolution: science as they say, is not of things in themselves, but of them as they are represented in us.

Aristotle examined this objection of Protagorus in book IV of the *Metaphysics,* ch. 4, 1007b22 (lect. 8 in St. Thomas' commentary) and C. 5, 1009al0 (lect. 9).

Aristotle answers: Contradictories cannot be true at the same time. But in Protagoras' position contradictories can be true at the same time, for if honey seems sweet to me and bitter to you, both statements are true, having supposed that all things which seem to be true to anyone are true. Therefore the position of Protagoras cannot be admitted.

To some this answer of Aristotle does not seem to the point; for, as they say, Protagoras would respond: in my position contradictories are true at the same time, subjectively and in different subjects, I concede; [that they are] really [true] objectively, I do not know.

But then Aristotle would say: you do not know, therefore you doubt the real force of the principle of contradiction, namely according to you: perhaps something could be sweet and not sweet outside of the mind at the same time and in the same respect, or at once circular and not circular, or perhaps even something could exist and not exist at the same time outside of the mind. If it is so, assuredly, then the knowledge of a thing outside of the mind and of any reality would be entirely impossible. We could affirm nothing at all not even that honey commonly seems sweet subjectively to other men, in this way all universal science perishes, or rather all experience and all opinion, for no opinion is more probable than another; and if we cannot affirm or believe anything, it follows we cannot desire, will or act for anything; every certainty, every belief, every action is destroyed.

We cannot even distinguish a man and a ship [triremis?] with certainty. Then we must observe an absolute silence, man is like a plant which can know absolutely nothing.

To the contrary, Aristotle adds in book III of the *De Anima,* c. 8 [lect. 13], the one knowing does not differ from what he is knowing, just as he is able, in a certain way, to become something different from himself, and the human soul, by knowing, in a certain way becomes all things.

St. Thomas perfects this doctrine, saying in I, q. 14, a. 1 "An intelligent being is distinguished from an unintelligent one (like a plant), by the fact that it possesses only its form, but an intelligent being can possess the form of another thing, for the species known is in the one knowing". Le.: An intelligent being differs properly from an unitelligent one in that it can intentionally or representatively become something other than itself, on account of its immateriality, by reason of which it receives the form of

another thing, not by restriction limiting or appropriating it materially. E.g. when a statue of Apollo is received materially in marble, or in a line, then indeed it is restricted, limited, appropriated, it becomes the form of this statute; to the contrary when the figure of Apollo is received immaterially in the one knowing, it is not appropriated or limited by him, it remains the form of the other thing in him, namely of the thing outside of the mind. Matter limits form in the thing which receives it, thus it is the principle of individuation. But the cognitive principle is immaterial, and it is in him more by which it is more known, cf. I, q. 14, a. 1. [????]

But idealists begin by renewing the objection best formulated by St. Thomas, I, q. 85, a. 2, obj. 1. This difficulty is briefly expressed:

The understanding in act is in the one understanding.

And only the species or representation is in the one understanding

Therefore the species is itself the understanding in act.

According to St. Thomas, it is answered by distinguishing the major: the understanding in act is in the one understanding representatively through its likeness, I concede; really, I deny. I concede the minor: only the species in the one understanding, and I distinguish the conclusion, namely: therefore the species itself is itself the understanding in act, really, I deny: representatively as its likeness, I concede. St. Thomas says in the same article ad 1: "It does not follow that the intelligible species is abstracted as that which is understood in act, but that it is its likeness". - Again he said in the body of the same article: "that which is primarily understood is the thing, whose intelligible species is a likeness."

The last instance is yet proposed in the second objection, namely: The understanding in act ought to be in something. And it is not in the material thing which is only in the understanding potentially. Therefore it is in the understanding and is nothing other than a representation.

It is answered according to St. Thomas, I concede the major: the understanding in act ought to be in something. I distinguish the minor: and it is not in the material thing, with respect to the thing being understood, I concede, as a thing, I deny; and equally the conclusion is distinguished: the understanding in act is in the understanding with respect to the thing understood, I concede; with respect to that which is being understood, I deny. ????

St. Thomas commonly speaks this way.[15]

But if he should write in *De Potentia* q. 9, a.5: "This therefore is the thing understood primarily and per se, that which the intellect in itself conceives of the thing understood", this signifies that the mental word is not really that which is understood, except representatively, i.e. the word expresses that which is understood as is said a little later in the same place: "when the intellect understands something different from itself, it forms a concept of the thing itself which it signifies by speech." Again *De Potentia* q. 8,m a.l, corp.: "For on accept of this the intellect forms a conception of the thing in itself such that it knows the thing understood". For the thing is not actually understood except in a word, as in that concept: and the intellect by reflecting knows beyond itself its essential finality, namely that it is essentially relative to intelligible being, and equally

[15] S.C.G. I,II,75,n.5; IV,ll,n.l-De Ver., q. 10, a.9;-De Spiritualibus creat., a. 9 ad 6; -Comp. Th.,c. 85; -Quodlib. 8, a.4; -Com. in De An., I, III, lect. 8. Professor Maritain treats this subject at length and well in his last book *Degrees ofKnowledge,* p. 769-821; as he shows well, "that which" properly understood is not the mental word itself, but the nature of the thing represented in the word.

that the word is essentially relative to the nature of the thing and of the being outside of the mind. Without this essential relation to being the intellect it self and its conception would be thoroughly unintelligible; and the fact of knowledge would not be explained but destroyed.

But if the principle of contradiction or identity, namely "being is being, non-being is non-being" is a fundamental law not merely of mind or a being of reason, both possible and actual, then the fundamental reality, the principle of all principles, ought to be, not that universal evolution, but the Self-subsisting Being entirely simple and immutable, "to which nothing can be added".16 For the fundamental or supreme reality ought to be related to being, just as A is A, and next is Self-subsisting being, with absolute identity both the most perfect simplicity and greatest immutability, thus it is really and essentially distinguished from the world and from every composite and mutable reality. This is a confusion of pantheism briefly enunciated in the Vatican Council sess. Ill, c.l: "Since God is one singular, entirely simple and incommutable spiritual substance, we must say he is really and essentially distinguished from the world.

I.e. in God the principle of contradiction and identity, as the primary law of real being, is verified in the highest and most pure way. Nor do we only say ":a being is a being, and a non-being is a non-being" but "I am he who is"17

Many modern critics who subscribe to the idealism of Heel, do not seem to fully consider that this evolutionary idealism is the denial of this fundamental truth and of the ontological force of the principle of identity or contradiction. The hodl that the knote characteristic of Hegelianism is the absolute autonomy of our intellect; but this absolute

16 Cf. St. Thomas I, q.3,a.4, c. and ad 1.
17 Ex. 3:14 "God said to Moses: I am He who is".

autonomy is necessarily connected with the denial of our intellect's dependence upon the real being distinguished from it, and from the primary law of being, which is the very principle of identity itself, by reason of this evolution, which is its reason, it intrinsically rejects.[18] If there is a fundamental law not only of the mind but of real being, it is the principles of contradiction or identity, then the fundamental reality out to be related to being, just as A is A, it ought to be the most simple and entirely immutable Self-subsisting being, and further a reality essentially distinct from evolution.[19] This is the only true notion of God: I am He who is. I am the Lord and I do not change.[20]

18 Cf. Heel, *Encyclopedia,* 1, 86, 87, 88.

19 It was recently written that the aforesaid affirmation of the principle of contradiction, as it is a law, not only logical, but ontological, remains in the phenomenological order of essences and does not yet come to the ontological order, before it explicitly refers to the existence of the knowing subject.

In fact, this would be trues, if the principle of contradiction were only a hypothetical truth in the nominalist sense of Nicholas of Autrecourt, whose proposition was condemned: "This is the first principle and not another: If something is, there is something" (Denzinger, 570).

Then, as we know (Realism and the principle of finality, p. 31) for nominalism and for subjective conceptualism: "if something is, there is something", but perhaps our notion of being lacks all real force, perhaps that which is absolutely inconceivable to us is not really impossible: perhaps something could take place without a cause it is not something really impossible, nay perhaps it is a fundamental reality.

To the contrary' we say with the traditional realism: the principle of contradiction is a categorical truth: that which is and cannot be and not be at the same time; it is not inconceivable, but it is really impossible that something at once be and not be. Further, this is the case more in that which is than in that which is coming to be and does not yet exist. Therefore, that is cannot be the primary and fundamental reality, which is not related to being just as A is A. - The principle of contradiction, as a law of being, is included in being which is the first thing known by our intellect, namely the first thing at least in the genus of the formal cause, if not in the genus of the material cause.

20 Mai. Ill, 6.